

AN UNDESCRIBED SUBSPECIES OF *DRYOBATES
PUBESCENS*.

BY C. F. BATCHELDER.

SOME Downy Woodpeckers I examined last autumn showed such marked differences between birds from different parts of the western United States that I have since then gathered together considerable material in order to find out what this geographical variation amounts to. I have been enabled, by the kindness of Messrs. Brewster, Ridgway, Jeffries, and other friends, to examine, in addition to my own series, a large number of specimens from various localities in the West, amounting altogether to ninety-five, besides nearly as many more Eastern skins.

These show plainly that the birds inhabiting the Rocky Mountains are of a race very different from true *gairdnerii*, which was originally described by Audubon from the Columbia River, and which in its typical form seems to be confined to the coast region of Oregon, Washington Territory, British Columbia, and possibly southern Alaska. I have concluded, therefore, to describe the former subspecies under the name of

***Dryobates pubescens oreæcus*,* subsp. nov.**

SUBSP. CHAR. — Similar to *D. p. gairdnerii*, but with the underparts pure white instead of light smoky brown, the white areas generally more extended, the under tail-coverts immaculate instead of being spotted or barred with black, the size somewhat greater except the feet which are relatively smaller.

Adult male (Type, No. 196, collection of C. F. Batchelder. Las Vegas Hot Springs, New Mexico, Dec. 18, 1882, C. F. Batchelder). Above black; nasal feathers whitish, sparingly mixed and tipped with black; two white stripes on each side of head; a scarlet nuchal band; a broad white stripe down the middle of back. Wings black, spotted with white, these spots, on the quills, mostly in pairs, one on each web, that on the inner web usually much the larger; the wing-coverts and inner secondaries with but few or none of these white spots. Middle tail-feathers black; the next pair black, or at most edged with white on terminal half of outer web; on the third pair the white covering nearly half the feather; on the outer two pairs the black restricted to the concealed basal portion of the feather and to a few small spots, rarely bars, on the terminal half

*ὄρειοῦκος = mountain-dwelling.

of the feather. Beneath, including under tail-coverts, immaculate white. Measurements:—wing, 105.1; tail, 65.4; culmen, 18.3; bill from nostril, 14.1; tarsus, 14.6; middle toe and claw, 19.9; hind toe, 13.2; claw of hind toe, 7.7 mm.

Adult female (Type, No. 216, collection of C. F. Batchelder. Loveland, Larimer Co., Colorado, Jan. 27, 1889, W. G. Smith). Similar to the male, but lacking the scarlet nuchal band. Measurements:—wing, 101.9; tail, 66.4; culmen, 18.2; bill from nostril, 14.5; tarsus, 16.0; middle toe and claw, 19.4; hind toe, 13.1; claw of hind toe, 8.0 mm.

While *D. p. oreæcus* is readily distinguished from *D. p. gairdnerii* by the characters given above, it is separable from *D. p. pubescens* of the East by the scarcity or absence of white spots on wing-coverts and inner secondaries, which character it shares with *D. p. gairdnerii*, by its greater size, and by its unspotted under tail-coverts. This latter character is very uniform; among eighteen skins from various points in the Rocky Mountain Region I find in one only a barely perceptible trace of spotting, while in all examined from the Pacific Coast and from the East the coverts are spotted, or sometimes even barred, with black. The relative size of the three forms is shown by the following average measurements of seventeen *D. p. gairdnerii* from British Columbia, Washington Territory, and Oregon, eighteen *D. p. oreæcus* from Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico, and twenty *D. pubescens* from New England and Pennsylvania.

	Wing.	Tail.	Culmen.	Bill from nostril.	Tarsus.	Middle toe and claw.	Hind toe.	Claw of hind toe.
<i>D. p. gairdnerii</i>	94.8	60.7	17.2	13.8	15.6	19.1	13.0	7.6
<i>D. p. oreæcus</i>	102.0	66.5	18.3	14.3	15.6	18.7	12.8	7.6
<i>D. pubescens</i>	94.4	59.6	17.7	13.6	15.4	17.6	12.5	7.2

Specimens from many intermediate localities show, as might be expected, every degree of intergradation between the typical forms, and this varies quite regularly according to the position of each locality.

Downy Woodpeckers from southern California show but a slight trace of the smoky tinge of *D. p. gairdnerii* and are even smaller than the Northwest Coast birds, but this seems hardly sufficient ground for their specific separation. It appears to have been a bird of this extreme southwestern form that Malherbe in 1861 described under the name of *Picus turati*. It was killed,

he says, not far from Monterey, and he describes it as not differing much from *D. p. gairdnerii* except by its smaller size.* The species is by no means abundant in southern California, and I have seen no specimens from south of San Bernardino County. A series of ten from various points in the southern half of the State gives the following average measurements: wing, 90.9; tail, 57.6; culmen, 16.9; bill from nostril, 13.2; tarsus, 15.1; middle toe and claw, 17.5; hind toe, 12.2; claw of hind toe, 7.2 mm.

AN UNUSUAL FLIGHT OF KILLDEER PLOVER
(*ÆGIALITIS VOCIFERA*) ALONG
THE NEW ENGLAND COAST.

BY DR. ARTHUR P. CHADBOURNE.

A VERY unusual flight of Killdeer Plover occurred along the New England coast in the latter part of November, 1888, and I have succeeded in collecting some data that may help to show from whence the birds came, and why they were found in certain places while only a short distance away they were absent or found in small numbers.

My data would have been far from satisfactory had it not been for the kindness of Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Division of Economic Ornithology of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, who sent circulars to all the light-house keepers on the Atlantic coast, asking about the occurrence of Killdeer Plover in the fall of 1888, and to these reports I am largely indebted for what I have been able to find out about the flight in question. Where there seems to have been any doubt of the identity of the birds noted, the report has been excluded from the following list, and this has necessarily left out some places where the birds appeared in small numbers.

* "Le *p. Gairdneri* d'Audubon a exactement, d'après ce dernier auteur, les dimensions du *pubescens*, qui est plus grand que mon espèce nouvelle."—MALHERBE, *Monographie des Picidees etc.*, Vol. I, p. 126.